

APPENDIX 1

Cllr Amy Kennedy
Green Member for Preston Park ward
Brighton & Hove City Council

Mr John Barradell
Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

Tuesday 12th October 2010

Dear Mr Barradell

BRIGHT START NURSERY CONSULTATION: REQUEST FOR CALL IN

I would like to request that the decision made on Monday 11th October in relation to Agenda Item 34 at the Children & Young People Cabinet Member Meeting (Bright Start Nursery Consultation) be called-in as per Section 6 of the Council's constitution.

During the meeting, the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People made the point repeatedly that the decision was concerned only with whether or not to consult on the future of Bright Start, rather than being an outright decision about the nursery's prospects and viability.

The report included details about the costs of refurbishment of the building, but the Cabinet Member refused to answer a public question about that issue (following legal advice), saying that that was a matter for the consultation itself.

Why then was this information included in the report? – surely, if data is contained within a report it is there to be addressed. Thus my first point in requesting a call in is that the recommendation was based on sections of the report that were not relevant to the decision to consult, and should therefore not have been included.

Secondly, the 'alternatives' section was presented as if all possible options had been considered, but many present at the meeting felt that this was not the case. If there are other alternatives, they need to be included, otherwise again the report is incomplete and any decision arising from that report is flawed, being informed by incomplete or misleading information.

There is also concern that, as the nursery could be considered a benefit for all staff, possible closure of the nursery should include all staff as potential users, otherwise it might be seen as a change to the terms and conditions of employment if a benefit is removed. Therefore the proposed consultation as it stands will not be wide enough, if it does go ahead.

Finally, the Cabinet Member gave no consideration to the point raised that the council has requirements placed on it by the Children's Act 2006 to ensure that there is sufficient nursery provision in the city. The report mentions this, but says that whether or not that becomes an issue is something to decide after the consultation.

It is in the Council's interest not to waste money consulting on something it may not be able to do legally, and if the Children's Act 2006 prevents the closure of Bright Start, that should be made clear from the outset.

Many thanks for your consideration of my request to call in the decision about the Bright Start Nursery consultation.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Amy Kennedy